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SERVICE DATE - DECEMBER 22, 2003

DO

FR-4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-601 (Sub-No. 1X)]

Pine Belt Southern Railroad Company, Inc.—Abandonment Exemption—in Lee and Chambers Counties, AL

Pine Belt Southern Railroad Company, Inc. (PBRR) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—Exempt Abandonments to abandon a 17.4-mile line of railroad between milepost T-322.40 at Roanoke Junction and milepost T-339.66 at Lafayette, in Lee and Chambers Counties, AL.¹ The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 36801, 36802, 36803, 36804 and 36862.

PBRR has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there has been no overhead traffic on the line during the past 2 years; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic

¹ The City of Opelika (City) filed a request for imposition of a public use condition and for issuance of a notice of interim trail use for the entire line pursuant to section 8(d) of the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. 1247(d). The Board will address the City's public use and trail use requests, and any others that may be filed, in a subsequent decision.

reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employees adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under Oregon Short Line R. Co.-Abandonment-Goshen, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protect affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed. Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on January 21, 2004, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,² formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),³ and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by January 2, 2004. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by January 12, 2004, with: Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to PBRR's representative: G. Richard Abernathy, P. O. Box 1317, Shelbyville, TN 37162.

² The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

³ Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1,100. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio.

PBRR has filed an environmental report which addresses the abandonment's effects, if any, on the environment and historic resources. SEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by December 23, 2003. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.] Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), PBRR shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by PBRR's filing of a notice of consummation by December 22, 2004, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at

“WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.”

Decided: December 10, 2003.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary